

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Case, W R & Sons Cutlery Co

Northwest Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center

W.R. Case & Sons Cutlery Employs Value Stream Mapping to Improve Efficiency

Client Profile:

W.R. Case & Sons Cutlery Company is a manufacturer of premium, hand-crafted knives that fit virtually any need, from convenient folding pocketknives and fixed blade sporting knives to limited edition commemoratives and collectibles. Based in Bradford, Pennsylvania the company employs 400 people.

Situation:

W.R. Case & Sons Cutlery wished to improve efficiency, identify and quantify inefficiencies, and reduce inventory costs by employing the methods of Value Stream Mapping (VSM). The mission of Value Stream Mapping is to teach the process participants to identify the real value (as defined by the customer) in a process, to differentiate value from waste, and to develop a plan to reduce or eliminate the waste. The power in the VSM process is the consensus around the action plan and the commitment of management to support it. W.R. Case & Sons Cutlery contacted the Northwest Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center (NWIRC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

Solution:

NWIRC conducted a VSM exercise on the blade component of the hunter knife. The process analyzed the current state of both the product and information flows, documenting all relevant data that contribute to delivery, cycle time, touch time, lead time, quality and cost. A future state was constructed for that value stream along with defined and scheduled steps (process, people, and information improvements) with responsibilities required to achieve that future state. NWIRC worked with the company to lay out the material and information flows as they are at the time of the event as well as gather data (including existing data) on the cycle time, work time, quality, waste and other issues. The team identified each process step as either value added or non-value added, created a spaghetti diagram, and summarized the current state. Based on what the team learned, a future state was developed and action plans formulated to lead the company toward realizing the gains identified during the VSM process.

Results:

Projected:

- * Increased sales of \$25,000.
- * Cost savings of \$75,000.
- * Reduced cycle time by 50 percent.
- * Reduced set-up time by 16 percent.
- * Reduced touch time by 22 percent.

Testimonial:

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"The sheer number of operations that go into our product added complexity to the VSM process; however, NWPIRC's experience was very helpful in dealing with those complexities. It was also very helpful in having a diverse, multi-functional team involved. W. R. Case continues to work through the actions that this team devised and we are well on our way toward realizing all of our goals."

Gregg Reynolds, Continuous Improvement Coordinator